

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
AUGUST 2, 2005**

PRESENT: Commissioners John M. Hyk (Chairman), Charles G. Boetsch and Amy R. Fowler, Treasurer David Parkman and County Clerk Barbara Arseneau.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

D. Parkman reviewed the anticipated revenues. He reported that the Community Corrections reimbursement was low and the Board revenue was also low at this point in the year. There was brief discussion of whether Waldo has sent in the Corrections Expenditure Report. B. Arseneau stated that she expected K. Ward had already completed this, as she is always quick to take care of things.

APPROPRIATIONS:

The Commissioners reviewed the appropriations report, and D. Parkman read the expenditures from the Active/Restricted Reserve accounts.

****G. Boetsch moved, A. Fowler seconded accepting the Treasurer's Report. Unanimous.**

****G. Boetsch moved, A. Fowler seconded approving payment of the July 29, 2005 Regular Warrant in the amount of \$202,722.31. Unanimous.**

****G. Boetsch moved, A. Fowler seconded approving payment of the July 29, 2005 Active/Restricted Reserve Warrant in the amount of \$12,416.57. Unanimous.**

****G. Boetsch moved, A. Fowler seconded approving the payment of the August 2, 2005 Active/Restricted Reserve Accounts in the amount of \$13,837.32. Unanimous.**

****G. Boetsch moved, A. Fowler seconded approving the payment of the August 2, 2005 Regular Warrant in the amount of \$13,837.32. Unanimous.**

There was some discussion on how to talk to the Budget Committee about surplus. D. Parkman said he would address surplus and that "the belt has been tightened so much, there's nothing left." Other items of concern were the cost of fuel oil and the heating issues at the Superior Courthouse, and the CAD system that may have to be replaced right away because the current company has so few customers left. (Sheriff Story entered into the meeting.) There was brief discussion of the recent Jail Administrator vacancy. Sheriff Story planned to move over to the Jail Monday because there is no Deputy Jail Administrator.

MEETING WITH ISLESBORO:

Present for this discussion were Town Manager Damaris "Marnie" Diffin, resident Marc Schnur, Selectmen Susan Schnur, David Pendleton, Andrew Anderson, Vicki Conover and Andrew Coombs; also Sheriff Scott Story and Treasurer David Parkman.

A. Anderson stated that he was Chair of the "Waldo to Knox" group. The legislature felt that they had not needed them to legislate a process for discussion of secession. There were a number of steps in that legislative document. They wanted to see what aspects of the bill could be discussed and how to have Waldo County not oppose this.

J. Hyk confessed that he did not know how to respond to this without thinking for a while. He understood the reasons for Islesboro thinking that they would like to secede. He admitted that he was not excited about the idea, but was willing to listen and be civil.

G. Boetsch asked what points the group was referring to.

A. Anderson explained that perhaps there could be some negotiation. There were points in the document that allowed for mediation, etc.

J. Hyk stated that he was not going to encourage or facilitate Islesboro leaving Waldo County. The Commissioners in Knox, in his opinion, had no business to encourage a town in Waldo County to secede to them. It was not appropriate. J. Hyk said he had spoken with many selectmen in Waldo County and the view is that secession of Islesboro would be to the detriment of Waldo County.

Mark Schnur asked if the Commissioners would not negotiate a “package” (payment) to leave. A. Fowler asked for clarification on the word “negotiate.”

A. Anderson explained that Islesboro would be willing to pay in order to leave Waldo County. J. Hyk queried, “Do you mean you would be ‘bought off?’” M. Schnur clarified that it was more of a “buy out.” A. Fowler asked what Knox would do for Islesboro that Waldo hasn’t or can’t. A. Anderson responded that it could provide an “island community,” and Islesboro would be lower on the ladder for taxes. Vinalhaven has the same valuation. Islesboro felt that they would be paying 80% less to Knox County than to Waldo County. J. Hyk asked if the group agreed that their desire to leave was not the fault of the Waldo County Commissioners. A. Anderson assured the Commissioners that they were not blaming the Commissioners. J. Hyk conceded that property tax “was not a great system,” but by law, there was nothing the County Commissioners could do.

D. Parkman discussed the issue that the Knox County Jail is already over-crowded and there was most likely going to be a strip-search lawsuit. He asked the group if they were sure that’d really be paying less to Knox than Waldo County. A. Anderson replied that Islesboro would be 5th or 6th highest in terms of taxation (as compared with being 2nd highest in Waldo County.) D. Parkman contended that Islesboro could be saved a great deal of money if Deeds Surcharge was kept in the County instead of going to the State. He commented, “You’re only getting about \$27,000.00, according to last year’s figures.” He had done some calculating and, according to his figures, Winterport would be about second and Islesboro would be about 4th. He wondered if that would be agreeable to the other towns.

A. Anderson suggested looking at the fee structure Knox County uses for their Communications Center, which is done by population. He didn’t know if this could be “sold” to the other towns. Islesboro pays \$77,000.00 toward this portion of the County Budget. In Knox, they would only be paying \$11,000.00.

J. Hyk stated that one of the Jail Committee’s recommendations is more of a “user-funded” method. With the communications Center, it has been set up differently. It would require a lot of effort to change to a “user-fee” method. He felt that he had not seen enough “numbers” to form an opinion.

M. Schnur contended, “The basic root problem is County Government needs reform. When it reaches legislation, the staunch supporters of County Government are the small towns that benefit by having police force paid for by County taxes. The Jail could be reformed, the Sheriff’s Department – the three tiers: State,

County and local. Training is the same. If Counties supported reform, it could happen. People have been saying it for thirty years!”

J. Hyk noted that in every North American State that has local, County and State service, the calls for such service keep going up.

S. Story contended that reform based on people saying the system is “old” in this country and focusing on the “constitution.” He claimed that in Waldo County, 45% of the calls for service are criminal calls. “You never hear about State reform. The State doesn’t pay what it said it would in Jails, in unfunded mandates, etc.” S. Story referred to the consolidating of computers and described it as “a mess at the State level.” He argued, “Nobody jumps up from the State to say the can do law enforcement, Deeds, etc., cheaper at the State level.”

M. Schnur voiced that he did not want to debate this. “If you feel County Government is part of a democratic process and needs no change, that the jails are efficient, etc...”

S. Story countered, “Nowhere do we hear about State or Municipal reform. Counties are an easy target. We *are* efficient – we get a lot of work done. The word ‘reform’ is so negative. Right off the top of your head, do you know what your property taxes are? How much did you pay for sales tax last year?”

J. Hyk inquired of M. Schnur if he thought that Knox was more efficient. M. Schnur replied that it was.

Susan Schnur explained that wanted to secede to Knox County was not meant as a criticism to Waldo County, it was just that islands have different problems. She thought perhaps an “island” county should be formed. She emphasized that mainland issues are different from island issues.

D. Parkman ventured that the problem is not islands and asked why Islesboro didn’t join Hancock or Washington counties. He wondered if Islesboro would be “more in tune with” one of those counties. There was brief discussion of how to be governed - the top level (the State) with less voting power by the people, etc. He added, “Islesboro pays for 13% of Waldo’s revenues. Your secession would devastate us. How would you buy out?”

M. Schnur responded, “The County used to do roads and bridges. It is now a layer of government that does Deeds, Probate and provides court space. I don’t think county government should exist at all, but that’s not what we’re here for. Islesboro pays more than the fair share.”

G. Boetsch asked if Islesboro was suggesting “feathering out.” A. Anderson answered in the affirmative. M. Schnur stipulated that Islesboro would not want to incur any new debt, such as a new jail. He commented, “Islesboro has only sent one person to the Jail in the past three years. I suppose Sheriff Story would probably say we should send more inmates from Islesboro.”

S. Story strongly objected to that comment and pointed out that he had never that and never would. He pronounced M. Schnur’s comment as “ inappropriate.”

M. Schnur apologized and continued to talk about the budget process. He felt that the Commissioners have “made it a done deal.”

J. Hyk corrected M. Schnur and stated that the Budget Committee votes on every line in the budget. M. Schnur retorted, "Nine people vote, not the whole county."

D. Parkman pointed out that there are three selectmen from every district that make up the Budget Committee. He added that it is always a problem finding people to serve on the committee. He declared that if he were Islesboro, he would always have a representative on that committee. He noted that there often isn't the full number of nine on the committee and described the process as including four to five meetings during which every line in the budget is reviewed. The Budget Committee cuts down the budgets as it sees fit. "It is democratic," he charged.

D. Diffin asked the group, "Could we get back on topic? This budget discussion is enlightening, but that's not why we're here."

G. Boetsch asked Chairman J. Hyk if he could redirect the discussion. J. Hyk agreed. G. Boetsch inquired how Knox County was more efficient than Waldo.

A. Anderson mentioned again the fee structure for the Communications Center as an example of efficiency. He also listed the charter process with the County Administrator there in Knox as "more efficient." His opinion was that the Administrator's salary could be justified by the cost effectiveness that position would deliver. (B. Arseneau was instructed to find out what cost savings have been generated by hiring a County Administrator or Manager.)

A. Fowler inquired about the previous statement indicating that Islesboro would only be paying \$11,000.00 for the Communications Center in Knox, if they could be sure that's all they would be paying and wondered about State mandates that aren't even questioned.

D. Diffin stated that the group had hoped that this would be the first of many meetings in which agreements could be achieved. A. Fowler asked if Islesboro sends anyone to Selectmen's Meetings and G. Hartley confirmed that someone from Islesboro does attend.

S. Story restated his view that the "State divides and conquers. If we were all on the same side, maybe some of the issues you have might be resolved. Be unified and change some of the rules. It sounds like I'm trying to blame the State, but I'm not. We [the County] *are* efficient. We need to stop 'taking it on the chin.' I saw a lot of good legislation die due to lack of funding. I assume you want local schools, etc. – the State wanted larger groups of consolidated local control. I read today that the Governor is backing off. The tide may be turning. We need to collectively show where to focus.

D. Diffin, to S. Story, suggested that maybe he could share some of the "hot topics" that came up and will come up again.

S. Story informed the group that a paid lobbyist doesn't get nearly as much attention as a collective group.

J. Hyk assented, "If we had a different system, you wouldn't be here today."

A. Fowler addressed the group and told them that she felt they were "putting a Band-Aid on something as a quick fix."

M. Schnur explained that Knox wasn't "reaching out to us to get their tentacles into us. We formed a committee. We have cohesiveness with Vinalhaven and North Haven. If we were in the same county, we could address common issues of islands together."

A. Fowler asked if Islesboro had researched other counties, to which M. Schnur replied that they had not because it had to be an abutting county in order to secede.

D. Pendleton interjected, "Islands have been independent since day one. I've never seen the islands getting together."

J. Hyk mused that what he was hearing is that islands are independent but do like to work together. He asked if the taxes in Knox would be more than in Waldo County, would Islesboro still be want to secede to Knox.

M. Schnur replied, "Not likely."

S. Story offered to provide a list of legislative topics that were of interest. He commented that a lot of inmates are transferred from the State and are not local.

J. Hyk asserted that when the State shut down the mentally ill institutions, these people started to come to the county jails. He argued that this is the wrong way to treat people and that the County is paying to do the wrong thing.

S. Story said he'd rather be shoulder to shoulder with Islesboro than "hear slams" on his department over the Internet. He expressed his offense at this, but added that he would be happy to address issues along with Islesboro at the State level.

S. Schnur explained that S. Story listened to irate people and that they represent people who are irritated. "We are acting on behalf of the people," she stated.

V. Conover asked if the County would address, on Islesboro's level, some of their issues and wondered if there was something that could be done.

J. Hyk replied, "The State formulas is set."

V. Conover clarified that she was referring to the Communications Center funding.

J. Hyk replied that might be the only place. He reminded everyone that it was created by all towns wanting 911 in the County and paid for by taxes.

D. Parkman described half the County budget as being comprised of three departments that deal in services, specifically the Jail, Sheriff's patrol and Communications Center staff. He mentioned that, if the referendum had passed and a jail was being built, the county could have been gaining revenue while having a new jail because they could have boarded other counties' inmates. He added, "We service you with courthouses, Deeds and Probate. You can't move these to Islesboro. This is not like a culvert issue in your road."

A. Anderson responded that Islesboro was not asking for more services.

J. Hyk asked the group to let the Commissioners know if they would like to have another meeting. He asked if there were any FY 2006 Budget Committee members present, to which V. Conover replied that she was. S. Story invited her, as a new member, to tour the Jail and Sheriff's Department.

The Commissioners thanked the Islesboro group for meeting with them and they, in turn, thanked the Commissioners for arranging the time to meet.

DISTRICT COURTHOUSE CHIMNEY ISSUE:

Present for this discussion with the Commissioners was Architect Robert Fenney and Facilities Manager James Conley.

R. Fenney informed the Commissioners that the chimney cap had been removed and the chimney was found to "wind and turn." He took measurements and is starting to get a handle on what's there. There is a possibility of getting a chimney built through certain areas of the building. J. Hyk asked if a new chimney would have to be built. R. Fenney believed so. He didn't think they could attach a chimney to the lower part.

J. Hyk asked how much money was left in the District Courthouse budget, the Superior Courthouse budget, and if these funds were already designated for a specific purpose. All reviewed the appropriations sheets. J. Conley explained that in District Courthouse, some of that money was intended for finishing A.D.A. projects, which need to be done by the end of the year. There was really no additional funding in the repair line of that budget. In Superior Courthouse, there was about \$3,000.00 designated for completion of A.D.A. requirements.

R. Fenney asked permission to punch a few holes in the walls on the upper level of the District Courthouse to examine the chimney from that angle. The holes would be fixed later. The commissioners authorized this.

There was discussion about using the money allocated for the new District Courthouse boiler to fix the chimney first instead. R. Fenney commented that time was the issue. Even if the County bid this out tomorrow, the chimney couldn't be fixed until October at the earliest. He suggested bidding the boiler in January for spring.

SUPERIOR COURTHOUSE:

HEAT VALVES:

J. Hyk asked if there was any news on the valves for the Superior Courthouse heating system. J. Conley explained that they were waiting for a second bid from a contractor and still have the original \$8,000.00 bid. J. Hyk asked if R. Fenney had been involved in this bidding process, to which he replied that he had not. J. Hyk requested that he get involved, to which he agreed.

HAND RAILS:

J. Conley submitted the bid for brass handrails for the inside granite stairwells in the Superior Courthouse. The total bid was for just over \$6,000.00. J. Conley asked if a historical person could offer advice. J. Hyk felt that if it was a new railing, it did not need to look like an original. R. Fenney offered a different perspective. A historical person will suggest brass, but for the cost, a black painted railing would not detract

from the look of the existing interior. J. Conley had talked about this project with the gentleman who fabricated the black railing in front of the District Courthouse this summer. This contractor felt that the railing could be done for about \$2,400.00. The curves would have to be bent. R. Fenney agreed that they could be bent, welded onto the rest, ground down and then a high-end paint job would finish it well. J. Hyk felt that since it was a historical building, it should be done right – in brass. He announced that he would not vote on this. A. Fowler reminded the other Commissioners that Islesboro had just finished commenting on expenses in the County and wondered what they would think of a \$6,000.00 brass railing. There was further discussion about both appearance and safety. J. Hyk suggested taking pictures of the stairs and bringing it before the Budget Committee in 2006 so that they would know what they were dealing with.

Wilson Hess, FY 2005 Budget Committee member, was present at this time. When asked, he informed the Commissioners that, as a Budget Committee member, what he would recommend doing with the railing was to lean toward doing the cheaper railing, but remarked that this could be challenged by someone who cares about the historical appearance of the building.

RECORDING BUILDING MAINTENANCE:

J. Hyk asked J. Conley if he was entering building maintenance record into the computer. J. Conley responded that he had not because of time constraints. B. Arseneau wondered if a computer should be ordered with the proper software for building maintenance in 2006.

PAINTING:

There was discussion of a framed painted picture that had fallen and broken during recent painting of the Superior Courthouse lobby. J. Conley had not fixed it right away and Judge Mills had taken it to be repaired and then requested that it be put in the Judge's chamber. The Commissioners determined that it should be hung back up where it had been and that the Judge should be reimbursed for the cost of the repairs.

TRAINING:

J. Conley requested that he be allowed to attend a two-day course in Facilities Management. The Commissioners authorized this training.

LIGHTING:

J. Conley requested permission to bring in a lighting expert to address the lighting situation in the Superior Courtroom. The Commissioners authorized this consultation, to be paid from the Superior Courthouse maintenance line.

COUNTY BENEFITS SURVEY RESULTS:

Present with the Commissioners to review the study results was Human Resources/Payroll Director Michelle Adams.

M. Adams informed the Commissioners that, as part of the Compensation Study being performed by Winters Associates, she had put together a survey asking the County employees how they rate the importance of specific county benefits. Following were the results:

- Nearly half of all surveys received (26%) asked for dental insurance.
- Some inquired about a flexible spending plan for medical expenses.
- The employees listed the benefits and salary in the order of importance as follows:
 1. Hourly pay or salary
 2. Aetna Health/Eye Insurance
 3. Paid Leave

4. Retirement Plan
5. Group Life Insurance
6. 457 Deferred Comp Plan
7. Life and Disability Insurance
8. Additional Vision (Comm. Center employees only)

J. Hyk remarked that his only comment on dental insurance is that he has heard it is very expensive to the employer and the employee. A. Fowler agreed that this was how it was with the State.

W. Hess explained that you pay for your rate the basic amount you'd be paying per year to go to the dentist anyway. Depending on the plan, a very few people would use the larger dental expenses.

Regarding the flexible spending plan, W. Hess commented that he could see the compensation study had proven that the current health insurance is very good. He briefly discussed the flexible spending and described it as "pre-tax." He thought it might be considered for the future because it takes a while to "ramp up." He suggested considering a 129 Plan, which allows an employee to put aside money in a pre-tax situation. It would require the Commissioners' vote and the payroll company would need to be notified. It only costs a little for administrative fees. He explained that it is a "use it or lose it" plan. If the employee doesn't expend the money they've put into the plan during the year (typically like a tax year), they lose it.

J. Hyk informed W. Hess that the Commissioners were looking into re-enrolling with Maine State Retirement System in the near future.

FY 2006 BUDGET CAUCUS:

Present for the caucus were Budget Committee Members Samuel Butler of Winterport, Richard Desmarais of Searsport, Wilson Hess of Freedom and Bill Sneed of Prospect. Also present were Treasurer David Parkman and Sheriff Scott Story.

District 1:

Islesboro nominated Vicki Conover to fill the vacancy left by Grayson Hartley for the second year of the three-year term.

Bill Sneed nominated Bradford Payne from Lincolnville to fill the vacancy left by Tom Nolan for the third year of the three-year term.

District 2:

Searsport has nominated Richard Desmarais to serve on the Committee for the first of a three-year term.

District 3:

Wilson Hess nominated Thomas Pilsbury of Palermo to serve on the Committee for the first of a three-year term.

A. Fowler said she wasn't sure, but she had heard that Jim Bennett was not planning to serve on the Budget Committee again this year. B. Arseneau stated that she had not received a response from either Jim or the Town of Thorndike, so she did not know what the situation was.

Wilson Hess nominated Ron Price of Knox to serve on the Committee for the first of a three-year term.

The Commissioners acknowledged these nominations, and the County Clerk recorded them for the ballots. The ballots will be sent to the Towns and are due back for the September 13, 2005 Commissioners Court Session.

BUDGET SUMMER SESSION:

All were invited to eat lunch as provided for this annual Budget Committee Meeting.

D. Parkman handed out the current revenue, reserves and appropriations (expenditures) sheets for the Budget Committee to review. There was some discussion about the Corrections Reimbursement being only 80% paid at this time because 20% was being held until all the corrections reports had been received from all the counties.

Surplus had turned out to \$106,000.00. Already \$34,00000 had been designated for building up the reserve accounts. Originally, it had appeared there would be about \$150,000.00 surplus, but this had not proven to be the case.

J. Hyk informed the Budget Committee of a “looming problem” in the Communications Center and asked S. Story to handle this portion of the discussion.

S. Story explained that the system currently used for dispatching is sole-source and is a UNIX-based system by C.S.H. C.S.H. promised to update it to be more like a “Windows” format. The Sheriff indicated that there was a great deal of frustration with the system. The company is now down to only three users and there is grave concern that if the company continues to dwindle, in a worst-case scenario, the County might be “left holding the bag” with no way to repair, maintain or upgrade the equipment. He described the system as “not user-friendly,” and it is “not keeping up with the rest of the world.” He explained that he and Owen Smith and the technology consultant have been researching purchasing and leasing of another system. They are looking for the best buy, a system that is well respected and widely used. He acknowledged that these systems are expensive and indicated that leasing might be the more bearable approach. He noted that this requires specific software and is “not cheap.”

J. Hyk mentioned that he had spoken with Communications Director Owen Smith and he had confirmed that this system was necessary and would be a minimum of \$200,000.00. O. Smith told J. Hyk that Technology Consultant James Arseneau was researching other agencies to see what they were using. Two companies were being researched. One is IMC, which has two to three dozen in the State of Maine, plus many nationwide. The other company being researched is Spillman, which is also commonly used.

B. Sneed predicted, “If this company is down to three users, you are already “holding the bag.” He saw no benefit to leasing except repairs, maintenance and upgrades were “the company’s headaches,” rather than the County’s.

J. Hyk explained that the only way to borrow that kind of money to pay for the system outright was to go out to bond, which really didn’t make sense because the cost of the referendum would be so high for a comparatively small some of money. He mentioned it could also be paid for during one budget year or leased; otherwise, it was a bond issue in order to borrow funding.

W. Hess stated that the County should be building up the reserve account for Technology for the next big purchasing. S. Story explained that leasing was another way of financing.

J. Hyk referred to B. Sneed's previous involvement with getting the technology where it is now. He informed the Budget Committee that Jim Arseneau had recently been able to extend the current computer maintenance contracts until April 2007 out of necessity because the Technology Reserve had not been funded properly to keep up with the upgrades as originally planned.

S. Story suggested that B. Sneed talk with J. Arseneau to see if leasing is the "best bang for the buck" or if owning was a better alternative.

COMMUNICATIONS CENTER:

J. Hyk informed the group that Homeland Security funding is "looking dismal." O. Smith has suggested that that they not count on the funding from homeland security but budget for it in the operating budget.

S. Story informed the Committee that the City of Belfast and Waldo County, with the help of Grant Writer Cheryl Coats, applied for \$10,000.00 and received it recently. They were not sure the result would be the same with the Homeland Security Grant.

J. Hyk told the Committee that C. Coats, in Archivist capacity, has indexed and found numerous County roads and maps. She has done an excellent job. Because of her ability and success in writing records preservation grants, the Commissioners have recently sent her for training so that she will be able to write grants for things other than records preservation. There was brief discussion about reliance upon grants. S. Butler felt that these could not always be depended upon. S. Story indicated that there are some still out there that the County just isn't aware of and they are very beneficial when they can be obtained.

PROPOSED MAINE STATE RETIREMENT ENROLLMENT:

The Commissioners informed the Budget Committee of their intention to re-join MSRS. Currently, approximately half of the full time employees are already enrolled. The Commissioners felt it would be beneficial to re-join MSRS because the County needs a good retirement plan for its employees. They plan on keeping the 457 Deferred Comp Plan available for those who wish to enroll, particularly those individuals whose circumstances prevent them from enrolling with MSRS. It has been observed that the County is starting to lose employees again, especially to agencies with good retirement plans. S. Story commended the County for being on track if a good retirement plan could be offered to employees. He acknowledged that, thanks to previous and current boards of Commissioners and Budget Committees, things were much better than they had been in terms of salaries and benefits. It has helped to keep the employees and to avoid the high turnover rate the County saw before.

OTHER ISSUES FOR BUDGET COMMITTEE TO BE AWARE OF:

The Commissioners discussed the following briefly with the Budget Committee:

- Islesboro's issues with the County, their desire for a fee structure to fund the Communications Center, and their contention that the pay is too much to Waldo County and desire to "buy out" of Waldo to secede to Knox County.
- Islesboro's view that Knox County was more efficient and would be saving money by hiring a County Administrator.
- Possible lawsuits in Knox County for illegal strip searches and how that could impact their budget.

S. Story mentioned the need to address the Sheriff's building soon either by modular on either the current of new property for about \$125,000.00 to \$150,000.00. J. Hyk said he had learned that back in 1991 there was a task force that recommended a new Sheriff's Office building and Jail. In 2000 another task force found the same thing. Here it is, 5.5 years later and still nothing has been done to rectify the situation.

The Commissioners reported the Jail Research Committee's findings. The conclusions are the same – the County needs a new building for these facilities. The approach to finding a solution is the question at hand.

B. Sneed asked if inmate-boarding space has been shrinking and if they are incarcerating more people. S. Story responded, "Somewhat. Some pods are empty and not staffed in some of the jails. Yes, more people are being incarcerated, but Waldo County is aggressive with finding alternative sentencing. Engaging the services of V.O.A. [Volunteers of America] has been the best investment. We have saved at least \$125,000.00."

G. Boetsch mentioned the issue of displaced workers. He spoke about how, as a C.L.E.O. (Chief Local Elected Official) serving on this board, he knew the service center assist, with some county involvement. In the past year, the Counties were expected to create a "pilot project" of consolidation and regionalization. Cumberland County Manager Peter Crichton wanted to do an Economic Development project and have an Economic Development person to represent the County.

B. Sneed countered that the County already has Eastern Maine Development Corporation, which Waldo County has refused to fund in the past few years.

J. Hyk reviewed the history of E.M.D.C. by reminding all that over thirty years ago, the County founded E.M.D.C. In recent years, boards of Commissioners have felt economic development has nothing to do with counties. He felt, "We need to know if we want to be involved or not. The Budget Committee should advise us." There was discussion of wanting to get something back for funding them. D. Parkman wondered why the County would want to get involved with someone new. S. Butler agreed and remarked that E.M.D.C. were always willing to come at any time and meet if there were any questions. W. Hess mentioned that he had served on the Waldo County E.M.D.C. fifteen years ago. Now he serves on the Kennebec Valley Council of Government (K.V.C.O.G.) He counseled, "Someone has to be paying attention to long term investments and developments. The County may not have to keep track, but someone needs to."

B. Sneed voiced that there are three separate councils – Penobscot Valley C.O.G., K.V.C.O.G. and another one, but there is only one E.M.D.C. for the whole County. The C.O.G.'s were where most of the money came from and they were used for group purchasing. D. Parkman felt that the County needed to decide if it should be involved in economic growth and development or not.

S. Butler advocated keeping E.M.D.C. on the budget and they would discuss it as a committee in November.

(The group broke for lunch.)

FY 2006 SALARY DISCUSSION:

Present for this discussion with the Commissioners were Register of Probate Joanne Crowley, Deputy Register of Probate Sharon Peavey, Register of Deed Deloris Page, Facilities Manager James Conley, Communications Director Owen Smith, Chief Deputy Robert Keating, Sheriff Scott Story, H.R./Payroll

Director Michelle Adams, Deputy District Attorney Leane Zainea, Budget Committee Member Wilson Hess and County Clerk Barbara Arseneau.

J. Hyk welcomed all and explained that the forum would include time for input, questions and answers. He further explained that he had invited W. Hess to stay and assist, as he is knowledgeable in the area of compensation.

J. Hyk informed the Departments that the Commissioners planned to re-join Maine State Retirement System in July of 2006. He explained that employees could be enrolled in both the Deferred Comp Plan with Lord, Abbett & Co. and MSRS simultaneously, but they would not be receiving matching funds for both from the County. If enrolled in both, the Deferred Comp match would cease. When asked if that applied to those receiving both right now, J. Hyk responded, "The double-dipping will be coming to an end." There was discussion of continuing both but matching one only. W. Hess suggested having a representative from both MSRS and the Deferred Comp Plan come and answer questions for the employees.

B. Arseneau explained briefly how the Winter Associates Compensation Study had been prepared with "weighted averages."

There was detailed discussion about the current pay scales and the flaws in these. S. Story spoke up and explained that he had surveyed the sixteen counties, had taken the pay scales from all the counties and figured out the numbers. His opinion was that the Winters Associates Compensation study resulted in "skewed numbers." He had surveyed the nine Lieutenants existing in the state of Maine and found that there was no consideration given for tenure steps. If all surveyed were long-term, they were skewed high. If all were starting pay, they were skewed low.

It was generally agreed that the current Waldo County pay scales had no consistency. When the cost of living was factored in each year, it just messed them up further.

S. Story and M. Adams had been working on this together and B. Arseneau had been working on comparing counties for wages. S. Story and M. Adams had found that it appeared that the 8-year step was the most consistent with the Commissioners goals. They had tried using it as a starting point. L. Zainea wondered if the Department Heads should try to resolve the pay scale issue. W. Hess felt it was not a good use of time because the report stated that Winters Associates would provide pay scales at no extra charge.

It was noted that the report represents a "peer group." The cost of living (COLA) is at 3.1% at this point in the year, according to information received off the Internet regarding C.P.U. W. Hess noted that there were "equity issues and then *glaring* equity issues." He commented that equity issues always take time to fix and cannot usually be addressed in one cycle. With the help of a professional, the County could fix the pay scales. W. Hess counseled that it was important to have a broad concept of what a report is looking at. If "particulars" are being looked at, they can be.

S. Story spoke up. "Some of us Department Heads thought we *were* going to get the pay scales fixed. People [employees] will be upset when particular positions are adjusted higher than others. I contend we can go down the right path. Make them unhappy once instead of dragging it out over four years."

W. Hess stated that, as a member of the Budget Committee, the COLA is at 3.1%, the County is planning on re-enrolling with MSRS, etc., there are these equity issues – it is a lot all at once.

S. Story asked if, instead of giving a cost of living increase, the pay scales were addressed instead. He guessed it would probably end up about the same as a cost of living increase for most of the employees.

J. Hyk declared that he was grateful for all of this discussion. He felt everyone's thoughts had merit.

The pay scale situation was illustrated by examining the Deputy Register of Probate's pay. The employee in this position, Sharon Peavey, has been here over twenty-one years and is paid above average, according to the figures. It was argued that the salary average did not reflect anywhere whether tenure was considered or not. S. Peavey spoke up and pointed out that there are only three other Deputy Registers of Probate with tenure of over twenty years and that she is paid the lowest of the four.

L. Zainea wondered why weighted averages were used without looking at the starting averages, ending averages, etc.

W. Hess explained that there are different approaches to collecting averages – central, median, etc. He suggested, perhaps, that the County give the COLA and then build the scales later. Or, the County could fix the inequities and have those of higher grade moved more slowly.

L. Zainea brought up the Victim/Witness Advocate's position being below average, but a legal secretary, who was listed as the same classification, was being paid about average. She asked how one could be fixed and the other remain as it is when they are both in the same classification.

There was discussion of reclassification issues in the past. W. Hess suggested that this must be done systematically across the board.

J. Hyk expressed that he would like to deal with this but time was limited. He felt that the *gross* inequities should be fixed, even if other people didn't receive any increase. L. Zainea suggested that this process be a bit slower so as to deal with it correctly.

J. Hyk contended that some people are paid so low that the Commissioners do not want to wait any longer to address this.

W. Hess supported this approach. The suggestion was that the pay scales and inequities could be addressed in a timeframe of two to three years. He applauded the initiative of the Commissioners and the Department Heads.

S. Story declared, "If we're going to do this, we need to do it right. I'm not confident basing the pay scales on this [the Winters report.]"

J. Hyk asked the Department Heads what they wanted to do. Did they want to work on their own? Did they want to get the COLA and not fix the pay scales, or get the pay scales fixed and no COLA?

Several Department Heads expressed grave concern over the "rushed process" and felt that there were two different issues at hand – reclassification in addition to scale equity.

O. Smith suggested that some of the Department Heads were more comfortable with the system M. Adams and S. Story had devised than with the Winters Report figures.

S. Story commented that he *did* like the Winters report for the reason that it did step outside the county offices to see what was going on in other local businesses. His real contention was the lack of tenure information.

L. Zainea expressed that, based upon the data thus far she did not feel the departments were able or ready to do reclassifications and raises. She believed tenure did affect this.

J. Hyk asked if the Department Heads would work on the scales. S. Story pointed out that the gap needed to be widened between the Lieutenant and the Sergeants and Corporals. O. Smith said the same was true between the top Dispatch Supervisor and his own salary. L. Zainea felt that the individual departments would have to meet to address those whose pay needs to be “tweaked” in all the departments. S. Story claimed his patrol division was “bad.” L. Zainea expressed concerns over the Victim/Witness Advocate and Legal Secretary classifications.

There was considerable debate over which positions were paid well and which were not. Finally, in exasperation, J. Crowley declared the discussion to be “ludicrous,” especially in terms of “tweaking” or not “tweaking.” L. Zainea agreed, expressing her extreme discomfort as a Department Head.

J. Hyk stated that the goal has been to bring employees to the top of the bottom one-third in terms of pay compared to the other Maine Counties. He stated that there are Waldo County employees that are at the bottom.

O. Smith communicated that he had no problem telling some employees that those employees who are too low would be having their salaries addressed.

W. Hess commented that it was unfortunate that the word being used to describe addressing the budget was “tweaking.” He added that there were really only a small number of the most egregious inequities that needed to be addressed.

S. Story felt that he was in a different position because he knew what was in his department. He stated the purpose of this study, etc., was to fix the County’s pay scales.

J. Hyk felt that what the Sheriff was suggesting was reasonable, because he was presenting for the person who had been paid incorrectly.

D. Page stated that she had an employee who had been working with her for nine years who needed an increase.

L. Zainea felt that there were no major inequities in the District Attorney’s department.

O. Smith stated that the problem in the Communications Department was with the Supervisors and that the Communications Director’s salary was too close to the top supervisor.

W. Hess said it appeared that the County had been looking at external equity, but had not dealt with internal equity.

O. Smith noted, according to Winters Associates, his position was over-paid, but compared with other counties it was not. The real discrepancies, he felt, were that the supervisors needed to be increased and there needed to be more space between the salary of the Communications Director and the top supervisor.

There was discussion of whether a category was being allowed per department, rather than a number of people per department.

W. Hess suggested that the Commissioners consider re-enrolling with MSRS, that the Cost of Living increase of 3% be applied to all employees, that the Department Heads go back and look within their departments to see if any position was egregiously underpaid and see if the other positions were somewhat near the top of the bottom one-third of all the Maine Counties, since this had been the standard of measure the past few years.

A. Fowler mentioned that at a recent Commissioners Association meeting, two other counties had declared that they were ranked at “the top of the bottom one-third,” so there was obviously some confusion on the matter.

W. Hess reiterated that the Commissioners’ goal had been to look at the “top of the bottom one-third,” but he wondered if now, after reviewing the Winters’ report and hearing where the pay is for many of the county employees, perhaps the goal was really the “average” or mid-point, not the “top of the bottom one-third.”

It was agreed that more time would be given to the Department Heads to review the salaries of the employees within their departments and to return with their requests on August 30, 2005.

J. Hyk then addressed the Appointed/Exempt employees. W. Hess sat next to him to assist in interpreting the Winters Report in conjunction with the salary survey performed by Knox County with all the Maine Counties’ salaries for 2004.

J. Hyk stated that the Waldo County Clerk was the lowest paid in the State of Maine in 2004. His intention was to rectify this situation completely during 2006 because it had not been addressed fully over the past few years and was continuing to be behind. He also explained that there were other positions that needed to be addressed and recommended the following:

The salary of the Chief Deputy Sheriff would serve as a benchmark for the Appointed/Exempt. The Chief Deputy position currently was 4.73% below the top of the bottom one-third of all counties. To bring the other positions to that level of 4.73% below the top of the bottom one-third, the following salaries were recommended for FY 2006:

Communications Director – COLA (Cost-of-living increase of 3%), plus \$1,000.00

Facilities Manager - \$31,000.00 (No COLA)

Jail Administrator – would have gone to \$44,600.00 if current Jail Administrator were still going to be there.

County Clerk - \$43,000.00 (No COLA)

E.M.A. Director – COLA (3%) only

Chief Deputy – COLA (3%) only

Other Increases:

Communications Supervisors - COLA (3%) plus an additional 7% increase.

S. Story requested an 8.45% increase for the Lieutenant 20-year level, which would be \$20.54 per hour.

****A. Fowler moved, G. Boetsch seconded increasing the Lieutenant 20-year pay to \$20.54 per hour for FY 2006. Unanimous.**

J. Hyk asked if everybody was happy. The Department Heads thanked the Commissioners for allowing them to come back on August 30, 2005 with any other pay recommendations.

SCHEDULE FOR COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSIONS:

The agenda for August 30, 2005 Commissioners Court Session will include meeting with the Department Heads one more time to discuss salaries and an update on the District Courthouse chimney situation.

The agenda for the September 13, 2005 Commissioners Court Session will include a tax abatement hearing for David Gebhart of Northport, the Jail Research Committee Report at 9:30 a.m., and a tally of the FY 2006 Budget Committee ballots.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMISSIONERS BUSINESS:

G. Boetsch reported that the L.E.P.C. (Local Emergency Planning Committee) meetings would resume in September.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTATIVE:

The Commissioners appointed Deputy County Clerk Veronica LaBreck to serve as Waldo County's point of contact for economic development.

****G. Boetsch moved, J. Hyk seconded executing the contract with Maine Power Options to lock in at the recommended kilowatt price. Unanimous.**

CORRESPONDENCE

Present for reviewing correspondence was County Clerk Barbara Arseneau.

1. Communications Director Owen Smith requested confirmation of the appointment of Lorraine (Koch) Farmer from part-time Dispatcher to full-time effective August 1, 2005 to fill the vacancy created by the untimely passing of Dennis Bryant. Her starting pay will be \$12.77 per hour.

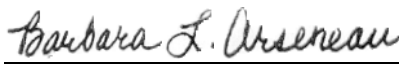
****A. Fowler moved, G. Boetsch seconded approving the hire of Lorraine Farmer as full time dispatcher at \$12.77 per hour, effective August 1, 2005. Unanimous.**

2. Sheriff Scott Story informed the Commissioners that Corrections Officer Brandon Smith has resigned, effective July 18, 2005.

****A. Fowler moved, G. Boetsch seconded accepting with regret the resignation of Corrections Officer Brandon Smith, effective July 18, 2005. Unanimous.**

3. The Commissioners noted the 12-year pay step of Corrections Officer Richard Roberts with a pay increase from \$14.52 to \$14.86 per hour, retroactive to May 15, 2005. S. Story apologized for the delay in submitting this increase.

4. B. Arseneau had been corresponding with Jail Research Committee member Grayson Hartley. She informed the Commissioners that the Committee could meet on September 13, 2005 to report to the Commissioners at 9:30 a.m.
5. Sheriff Story requested permission to run the ad for the Jail Administrator position in the Bangor Daily News for two Saturdays at \$330.60 each per day. The Commissioners granted permission.
6. An Email had been sent to the office stating that President Bush is declaring September 26, 2005 Family Day – a Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children and a request that the County issue a proclamation to that effect. The Commissioners briefly discussed this.
****A. Fowler moved, G. Boetsch seconded drafting a proclamation declaring September 26, 2005 as Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children. Passed by two; J. Hyk abstained.**
7. The Commissioners noted the outstanding professional behavior of Deputy Matthew Curtis during a recent difficult arrest. The Commissioners expressed commendation for his self-control and dignified treatment toward the person who was giving him a hard time. A formal letter would be drafted after the case had been handled.
8. A letter was received from Patrick Walsh of the Waldo County Preschool & Family Services requesting a letter verifying that the County is not able to allocate \$75,000.00 for funding a Juvenile Delinquency Prevention strategy. The Commissioners instructed B. Arseneau to send this letter of verification.
9. The Commissioners briefly reviewed a memo from Maine Emergency Management Agency dated July 22, 2005 regarding Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Application Period that is open. J. Hyk felt it was difficult to understand and decided to spend some additional time reading it later.
****G. Boetsch moved, A. Fowler seconded adjourning the meeting at 4:00 p.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by 
Waldo County Clerk